



Press Release

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Milltown Reservoir Draw Down Begins Today

Helena, Montana ---

Today, the Milltown Reservoir cleanup project takes its first visible step as authorities begin to permanently lower the reservoir water level. Over the next few weeks, the water level in the reservoir will be drawn down by 8-10 feet. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, this marks the beginning of Phase I of the Remedial Action and cleanup activities for the Milltown Dam.

The reservoir has been drawn down to similar levels before but this draw down will be permanent. It is necessary for a number of reasons: 1) Allow additional site exploration to help in design; 2) Allow precautionary stabilization work on the I-90 and Highway 200 bridges crossing the Blackfoot River; and 3) Set the stage for other needed site work later this fall.

The draw down will be done by removing the panel gates and then using these and the radial gates to release water from the reservoir. Additional scouring of sediments is expected during the high flow period and continuing for the next several weeks.

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EPA and the State of Montana are working with local contractor, Envirocon, Missoula County, the University of Montana, and the US Geological Survey to conduct extensive monitoring of groundwater and surface water and with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to monitor fish health during the draw down. Monitoring will continue throughout the life of the project.

Working with its partners, EPA developed plans to minimize sediment release and will take care to protect the river ecosystem and downstream use of the river. If necessary to protect these resources, the rate of the draw down can be slowed and the water level in the reservoir raised.

As during previous draw downs, reservoir sediments will be exposed. EPA and the State do not expect dust problems but will ensure that dust is controlled.

Access to the reservoir will not be restricted during the draw down. The public can continue with its normal activities in and around the reservoir until further notice.

The Atlantic Richfield Company and NorthWestern Energy are paying for this cleanup to remove the Milltown dam and the most-highly contaminated sediments in the Milltown Reservoir.

The Milltown Dam is scheduled for removal in spring 2008.

For additional information about the Milltown Project, please visit the following websites:

Monitoring data:

<ftp://milltown.envirocon.com>

Site-related design documents:

<http://www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/sites/mt/milltowncfr/home.html>

<ftp://public:mtpub05@64.25.133.122/>

<http://www.cfrtac.org>

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